

State Commission

The Hawaii Commission on National & Community Service manages a portfolio of eight AmeriCorps State programs that address the state's needs in the areas of education, environmental stewardship, disaster services, economic opportunity, healthy futures, and veterans and military families. In the 2014-2015 program year, 422 veterans were served as a result of AmeriCorps program efforts. AmeriCorps members in Hawaii serve each and every day to deliver on unmet community needs impacting a wide age range and a large diversity of people. Without these committed, engaged, and selfless service members, these efforts simply would not exist in these under-served and overburdened communities. Thousands of individuals in the community would receive little or no services and resources would be diverted away from those who need it most. AmeriCorps members provided critical services to homeless individuals to achieve stability and secure housing.

AmeriCorps State

Kupu AmeriCorps' 231 AmeriCorps members engaged 5,993 volunteers in service, which had a huge positive impact on the community and the environment. It also helped citizens to pursue higher education, become civically engaged, and find employment. AmeriCorps members completed projects on seven islands that helped conserve and protect natural resources and gave the members valuable mentorship and job training. Last year, members improved more than 1,180,670 acres of public lands, cleared more than 14,670 acres of invasive species, and, together with volunteers, gave 228,981 hours of service valued at \$5,298,620. Program participants had an average 51 percent increase in environmental literacy. Before they began their term, 52 percent of the members said they would have been unemployed if they had not served in Kupu AmeriCorps. Alumni who were surveyed a year after their term of service say that they are currently employed and/or enrolled in school (96 percent) or went on to complete at least one college course (76 percent). Furthermore, 81 percent said that they still volunteer in the community or actively seek volunteer opportunities.

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii's 18 AmeriCorps Project Kaulike members serve at eight sites across Hawaii, helping people navigate the civil justice system and deliver on their promise of equal access to "justice for all," regardless of socio-economic status. Members gave critical service to low-income, disadvantaged, and self-represented litigants. They interview applicants, teach legal clinics, recruit volunteer attorneys, provide services at self-help centers, and give limited legal assistance. Members served 3,847 people, including 416 veterans and their family members, and recruited or supported 201 volunteers. Thanks to the AmeriCorps members, at least 120 people reached their desired result in family law (child support, protective order, divorce, visitation, etc.); 18 avoided eviction, maintained, or obtained housing; 3 people were able to prevent foreclosure; 9 people secured or preserved a public assistance benefit; and 15 received a tax benefit. Members at the courthouse-based self-help centers helped develop partnerships between the Hawaii State Judiciary, the Hawaii State Bar Association, and Legal Aid.

AmeriCorps VISTA

Tiona Miyashiro, an AmeriCorps VISTA member with Malama Kauai, developed "Natural Resources Career Pathways: A Guide to Kauai's Community Resources." This resource guide for Kauai educators, parents, and students offers more than 40 community resource profiles offering assistance to students seeking future careers in the Natural Resources Career Pathway, which is one of the six identified by the State of Hawaii Department of Education as core areas of economic growth for today's youth. The guide offers a multitude of guest speakers and mentors, internship and volunteer opportunities, educational options, career pathway maps, and more.

AmeriCorps VISTA member Meredith McNair joined the Hawaii Community Assets - Building Stability in Housing Project to assist Hawaiian Community Development Board in establishing a supply market for accessory dwelling units (ADUs). ADUs were approved as legal housing units by the City and County of Honolulu on September 14, 2015 in response to statistics which cite that Hawaii residents have the lowest annual average pay rates and highest housing costs in the nation. Immediately, Meredith got to work and convened key stakeholders in meetings to launch a pilot project to build five ADUs on Hawaiian Home Lands for impoverished families. In addition, she developed an ADU presentation that was presented by Hawaiian Community Development Board at the Annual Native Hawaiian Housing Caucus, which brought together 54 individuals from the public and private sectors to identify recommendations to address Hawaii's growing homeless crisis. The top recommendation to come out of the Caucus was the support to build 400 ADUs, starting with the 5-unit pilot project envisioned by Meredith.

Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

In Fiscal Year 2015, the Hawaii Foster Grandparent Program focused on helping pre-school age children demonstrate gains in social and emotional development. Foster Grandparent volunteers engaged students in learning and advancing their reading comprehension and ability. The volunteers also assisted students in their social and emotional development. Seventy-seven percent of children in pre-school settings including Head Start programs served by a Foster Grandparent volunteer demonstrated gains in their social and emotional development as reported by their teachers. Reflective of this success is the story of Puna (short for Kupuna which means senior) Frank who volunteers at Lanakila Head Start and is beloved by the children, staff, and parents. This past year, Generations United selected Puna Frank as National Senior Volunteer of the Year as a testament to her work supporting intergenerational programs.

Senior Corps RSVP

Kauai RSVP volunteers rallied in support of MLK Day of Service by hosting a school supply drive for Kekaha Elementary School in Lihue. Community members including the mayor and city council members gathered at the Lihue Neighborhood Center to drop off and collect donations. The festivities included the signing of the Mayor's MLK Day Proclamation with special mention to the Kauai RVSP program. The day culminated with over 900 pens, markers, crayons, pencils, and tablets being donated to the 389 students of Kekaha Elementary School.

Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

The Hawaii Senior Companion Program was featured on the evening news on the local CBS affiliate KGMB in Honolulu. The story featured the special relationship between Senior Companion volunteer, Gerrine Budig, and her client, Ellen Corrie. Ms. Corrie is legally blind and says she'd have to go into a nursing home without assistance from Budig. "Words can't really tell you enough how blessed I am because without her, I know I would have to go in a home because I could never manage it all by myself," explains Corrie. The Hawaii Senior Companion Program exceeded its annual performance outcome goal by 191 percent with 67 individuals reporting an increased sense of social support due to the help and assistance of their senior companion volunteer.